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THE INTERNATIONAL MIND: HOW TO DEVELOP IT ¹

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FOR two generations it has been a common complaint that the people of the United States took no adequate interest in foreign policy and were without any but cursory knowledge of international politics. This judgment has been expressed, often publicly, by successive secretaries of state, by those who have held important diplomatic posts, and by those who, in the Senate of the United States, have seen long service upon the Committee on Foreign Relations. A sort of national self-centeredness together with a feeling of geographic and political isolation have combined to bring about this unfortunate state of affairs. It has been unfortunate for two reasons: first, because it marked a serious break with our earlier national tradition; and second, because it has held back the people and the government of the United States from making the full measure of contribution of which they were capable to the better and closer international organization of the world.

One need have but slight acquaintance with the writings and speeches of the Fathers and with the records of the early Congresses to know that, when the government of the United States was young, it was the eager ambition of those who most fully represented it to play a large part in the international life of the world, primarily with the view of advancing those ideas and those principles in which the people of the new American republic believed and to which they were committed. Benjamin Franklin was our first great internationalist. Alexander Hamilton, of whom Talleyrand said that he had divined Europe; Thomas Jefferson, whose public service in Europe was

¹ Introductory Address delivered at the National Conference on Foreign Relations of the United States, held under the auspices of the Academy of Political Science, at Long Beach, N. Y., May 28, 1917.

quite exceptional; as well as Chancellor Livingston, John Jay, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay not only knew western Europe, but were known by it. In making endeavor, therefore, to increase the interest of the American people in foreign relationships and in international policy we are but asking them to return to one of the finest and soundest of national traditions.

Our national self-absorption has held us back, too, from playing an adequate part in the development of that international organization which has long been under way and which the results of the present war will hasten and greatly advance. Despite these facts, and chiefly because of the high character and ability of those who represented the United States at the two Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, the American contributions to the deliberations and recommendations of those notable assemblies were most important. Indeed, when the record of history comes to be made up, it may be that those contributions will be judged to mark the beginning of a new epoch in the world's history.

The Conference which now assembles to consider and discuss the international relations and the international policies of the United States is a beginning and only a beginning of a campaign of education and enlightenment which is to continue until there has been developed among all parts and sections of our land what I ventured some years ago to describe as the "international mind." The international mind is nothing else than that habit of thinking of foreign relations and business, and that habit of dealing with them, which regards the several nations of the civilized world as free and co-operating equals in aiding the progress of civilization, in developing commerce and industry, and in spreading enlightenment and culture throughout the world. It would be as inconsistent with the international mind to attempt to steal some other nation's territory or to do that nation an unprovoked injury or damage, as it would be inconsistent with the principles of ordinary morality to attempt to steal some other individual's purse or to commit an unprovoked assault upon him. The international mind requires that a nation and its government shall freely

and gladly grant to every other nation and to every other government the rights and the privileges which it claims for itself. From this it follows that the international mind is not consonant with any theory of the state which regards the state as superior to the rules and restrictions of moral conduct or which admits the view that to some one state is committed the hegemony of the world's affairs for the world's good. When that doctrine prevails and takes hold of the conviction and the imagination of a great people, an issue is presented that cannot be settled by vote in conference, that cannot be arbitrated by the wisest statesmen, and that cannot be determined by the findings of any court. The authority and the value of each of these modes of procedure is challenged by the very issue itself. Therefore resort must be had to armed force in order to determine whether the international mind, shared by a score or more of independent and self-respecting nations, shall prevail or whether the arms of a non-moral, all-powerful, military imperialism shall be stretched out over the whole round world for its government and its protection. It is to determine this issue that the world is now at war.

Should the cause of imperialism, by any chance, win this war, the people of the United States would find it quite unnecessary for some time to come to concern themselves with foreign relations and with foreign policy. Those matters would be taken care of for them, by a power that had shown itself strong enough to overcome and to suppress internationally minded men and nations. On the other hand, if, as we confidently hope and believe, the issue of this war is to be favorable to the free self-governing democracies of the world, then the people of the United States must address themselves with redoubled energy and with closest attention to those matters of legislation, of administration, and of general public policy which constitute and determine national conduct. The first task of this conference and of every similar conference that may be held hereafter is to drive this lesson home.

When this task is undertaken it will speedily appear that our government is not well organized at the moment for the formulation and prosecution of effective international policies. The

division of authority between the national government and governments of the several states raises one set of problems. Action under the treaty-making power of the national government raises another set of problems, particularly since there is not yet a substantial unanimity of opinion as to the scope and authority of the treaty-making power itself, or as to the proper and effective means which should be at the command of the government of the United States for enforcing among its own people adherence to a treaty obligation into which, through their government, they have solemnly entered. The difficulties with which we shall have to contend are, therefore, not alone difficulties arising from present lack of popular information and present lack of popular interest in international policies, but they are also those which arise from the structure and the operation of our own form of constitutional government.

That the old secrecy of diplomatic action has gone forever is a happy circumstance. This secrecy was well suited to the making of conventions between ruling monarchs or reigning dynasties, or between governments which represented only very select and highly privileged classes. It has no place, however, in diplomatic intercourse between democratic peoples. The people themselves must understand and assent to international policies and contracts that are entered upon and executed in their name. Otherwise there can be no assurance that these policies will be executed and these contracts observed; for without foreknowledge on the part of the people of that to which they are committed there can be no successful moral appeal made to them to keep their word and their bond at a later time when an opposition may arise between principle and immediate self-interest.

We are assembled, then, to help begin a movement which must not cease until the entire American people are interested in their international relationships, their international position, and their international influence. When that shall have been even measurably accomplished, the people themselves will be quick to bring about such changes in the form of their governmental structure and in their administrative procedure, as

will enable them honorably and finely to maintain their place, not as a nation that lives to itself alone, but as a nation that shares with every other like-minded nation the desire and the purpose to improve the lot of mankind everywhere, and to carry into the uttermost parts of the earth those hopes, those principles, and those forms of governmental action that are best adapted to giving man the fullest opportunity to make himself free, and to be worthy of freedom.

(212)